

Job Opportunities in the Armed Forces

(O*NET 99003)

Significant Points

- Opportunities should be good in all branches of the Armed Forces for applicants who meet designated standards.
- Enlisted personnel need at least a high school diploma, while officers need a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- Hours and working conditions can be arduous and vary substantially.
- Some training and duty assignments are hazardous, even in peacetime.

Nature of the Work

Maintaining a strong national defense encompasses such diverse activities as running a hospital, commanding a tank, programming computers, operating a nuclear reactor, or repairing and maintaining a helicopter. The military provides training and work experience in these fields and many others for over 1.2 million people who serve in the active Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, their Reserve components, and the Air and Army National Guard.

The military distinguishes between enlisted and officer careers. Enlisted personnel comprise about 85 percent of the Armed Forces and carry out the fundamental operations of the military in areas such as combat, administration, construction, engineering, health care, and human resources. Officers, who make up the remaining 15 percent of the Armed Forces, are the leaders of the military. They supervise and manage activities in every occupational specialty in the military.

The following sections discuss the major occupational groups for enlisted personnel and officers.

Enlisted occupational groups:

Administrative careers include a wide variety of positions. The military must keep accurate information for planning and managing its operations. Paper and electronic records are kept on equipment, funds, personnel, supplies, and other property of the military. Enlisted administrative personnel record information, type reports, and maintain files to assist military offices. Personnel may work in a specialized area such as finance, accounting, legal, maintenance, or supply.

Combat specialty occupations refer to those enlisted specialties, such as infantry, artillery, and special forces, that operate weapons or execute special missions during combat situations. They normally specialize by the type of weapon system or combat operation. These personnel maneuver against enemy forces, and position and fire artillery, guns, and missiles to destroy enemy positions. They may also operate tanks and amphibious assault vehicles in combat or scouting missions. When the military has difficult and dangerous missions to perform, they call upon special operations teams. These elite combat forces stay in a constant state of readiness to strike anywhere in the world on a moment's notice. Special operations forces team members conduct offensive raids, demolitions, intelligence, search and rescue, and other missions from aboard aircraft, helicopters, ships, or submarines.

Construction occupations in the military include personnel who build or repair buildings, airfields, bridges, foundations, dams, bunkers, and the electrical and plumbing components of these structures. Enlisted personnel in construction occupations operate bulldozers, cranes, graders, and other heavy equipment. Construction specialists may also work with engineers and other building specialists as part of military

construction teams. Some personnel specialize in areas such as plumbing or electrical wiring. Plumbers and pipe fitters install and repair the plumbing and pipe systems needed in buildings, on aircraft, and ships. Building electricians install and repair electrical wiring systems in offices, airplane hangars, and other buildings on military bases.

Electronic and electrical equipment repair personnel repair and maintain electronic and electrical equipment used in the military today. Repairers normally specialize by type of equipment being repaired, such as avionics, computer, communications, or weapons systems. For example, avionics technicians install, test, maintain, and repair a wide variety of electronic systems including navigational and communications equipment on aircraft. Weapons maintenance technicians maintain and repair weapons used by combat forces, most of which have electronic components and systems that assist in locating targets, aiming weapons, and firing them.

The military has many *engineering, science, and technical* occupations that require specific knowledge to operate technical equipment, solve complex problems or to provide and interpret information. Enlisted personnel normally specialize in an area such as information technology, space operations, environmental health and safety, or intelligence. Information technology specialists, for example, develop software programs and operate computer systems. Space operations specialists use and repair spacecraft ground control command equipment, including electronic systems that track spacecraft location and operation. Environmental health and safety specialists inspect military facilities and food supplies for the presence of disease, germs, or other conditions hazardous to health and the environment. Intelligence specialists gather and study information using aerial photographs and various types of radar and surveillance systems.

Health care personnel assist medical professionals in treating and providing services for patients. They may work as part of a patient service team in close contact with doctors, dentists, nurses, and physical therapists to provide the necessary support functions within a hospital or clinic. Health care specialists normally specialize in a particular area. They may provide emergency medical treatment, operate diagnostic equipment such as X-ray and ultrasound equipment, conduct laboratory tests on tissue and blood samples, maintain pharmacy supplies, or maintain patient records.

Human resource development specialists recruit and place qualified personnel, and provide the training programs necessary to help people perform their jobs effectively. Personnel in this career area normally specialize by activity. Recruiting specialists, for example, provide information about military careers to young people, parents, schools, and local communities. They explain service employment and training opportunities, pay and benefits, and the nature of service life. Personnel specialists collect and store information about people's careers in the military, including training, job assignment, promotion, and health information. Training specialists and instructors provide military personnel with the knowledge needed to perform their jobs.

Machine operator and production careers include occupations that require the operation of industrial equipment, machinery, and tools to fabricate and repair parts for a variety of items and structures. They may operate boilers, turbines, nuclear reactors, and portable generators aboard ships and submarines. Personnel often specialize by type of work performed. Welders, for instance, work with various types of metals to repair or form the structural parts of ships, submarines, buildings, or other equipment. Other specialists inspect, maintain, and repair survival equipment such as parachutes and aircraft life support equipment.

Media and public affairs careers include those occupations that are involved in the public presentation and interpretation of military information and events. Enlisted media and public affairs personnel take

and develop photographs; film, record, and edit audio and video programs; present news and music programs; and produce graphic artwork, drawings, and other visual displays. Other public affairs specialists act as interpreters and translators to convert written or spoken foreign languages into English or other languages.

Protective service personnel enforce military laws and regulations and provide emergency response to natural and man made disasters. Personnel normally specialize by function. Specialists in emergency management implement response procedures for all types of disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, or enemy attack. Military police control traffic, prevent crime, and respond to emergencies. Other law enforcement and security specialists investigate crimes committed on military property and guard inmates in military correctional facilities. Firefighters put out, control, and help prevent fires in buildings, aircraft, and aboard ships.

Support services occupations include subsistence services and occupations that support the morale and well-being of military personnel and their families. Food service specialists prepare all types of food in dining halls, hospitals, and ships. Counselors help military personnel and their families to overcome social problems. They work as part of a team that may include social workers, psychologists, medical officers, chaplains, personnel specialists, and commanders. The military also provides chaplains and religious program specialists to help meet the spiritual needs of its personnel. Religious program specialists assist chaplains with religious services, religious education programs, and administrative duties.

Transportation and material handling specialists ensure the safe transport of people and cargo. Most personnel within this occupational group are classified according to mode of transportation (i.e. aircraft, automotive vehicle, or ship). Air crew members operate equipment on board aircraft during operations. Vehicle drivers operate all types of heavy military vehicles including fuel or water tank trucks, semi-tractor trailers, heavy troop transports, and passenger buses. Boat operators navigate and pilot many types of small water craft, including tugboats, gunboats, and barges. Cargo specialists load and unload military supplies and material using equipment such as forklifts and cranes.

Vehicle and machinery mechanics conduct preventive and corrective maintenance on aircraft, automotive and heavy equipment, heating and cooling systems, marine engines, and powerhouse station equipment. They typically specialize by the type of equipment that they maintain. Aircraft mechanics inspect, service, and repair helicopters and airplanes. Automotive and heavy equipment mechanics maintain and repair vehicles such as jeeps, cars, trucks, tanks, self-propelled missile launchers, and other combat vehicles. They also repair bulldozers, power shovels, and other construction

equipment. Heating and cooling mechanics install and repair air conditioning, refrigeration, and heating equipment. Marine engine mechanics repair and maintain gasoline and diesel engines on ships, boats, and other water craft. They also repair shipboard mechanical and electrical equipment. Powerhouse mechanics install, maintain, and repair electrical and mechanical equipment in power-generating stations.

Officer occupational groups:

Combat specialty officers plan and direct military operations, oversee combat activities, and serve as combat leaders. This category includes officers in charge of tanks and other armored assault vehicles, artillery systems, special forces, and infantry. They normally specialize by type of unit that they lead. Within the unit, they may specialize by the type of weapon system. Artillery and missile system officers, for example, direct personnel as they target, launch, test, and maintain various types of missiles and artillery. Special forces officers lead their units in offensive raids, demolitions, intelligence gathering, and search and rescue missions.

Engineering, science, and technical officers have a wide range of responsibilities based on their area of expertise. They lead or perform activities in areas such as information technology, environmental health and safety, and engineering. These officers may direct the operations of communications centers or the development of complex computer systems. Environmental health and safety officers study the air, ground, and water to identify and analyze sources of pollution and its effects. They also direct programs to control safety and health hazards in the work place. Other personnel work as aerospace engineers to design and direct the development of military aircraft, missiles, and spacecraft.

Executive, administrative, and managerial officers oversee and direct military activities in key functional areas such as finance, accounting, health administration, logistics, and supply. Health services administrators, for instance, are responsible for the overall quality of care provided at the hospitals and clinics they operate. They must ensure that each department works together to provide the highest quality of care. As another example, the military buys billions of dollars worth of equipment, supplies, and services from private industry each year. Purchasing and contracting managers negotiate and monitor contracts for purchasing equipment, materials, and services.

Health care officers provide health services at military facilities based on their area of specialization. Officers who examine, diagnose, and treat patients with illness, injury, or disease include physicians, registered nurses, and dentists. Other health care officers provide therapy, rehabilitative treatment, and other services for patients. Physical and occupational therapists plan and administer therapy to help patients adjust to disabilities, regain independence, and return to work. Speech therapists evaluate and treat patients with hearing and speech problems. Dietitians manage food service facilities and plan meals for hospital patients and outpatients who need special diets. Pharmacists manage the purchasing, storing, and dispensing of drugs and medicines.

Human resource development officers manage recruitment, placement, and training strategies and programs in the military. Personnel in this area normally specialize by activity. Recruiting managers direct recruiting efforts and provide information about military careers to young people, parents, schools, and local communities. Personnel managers direct military personnel functions such as job assignment, staff promotion, and career counseling. Training and education directors identify training needs and develop and manage educational programs designed to keep military personnel current in the skills they need to perform their jobs.

Support services officers include personnel who manage food service activities and perform services in support of the morale and well being of military personnel and their families. Food service managers oversee the preparation and delivery of food services within dining facilities located on military installations and vessels. Social workers focus on improving conditions that cause social problems, such as drug and alcohol abuse, racism, and sexism. Chaplains conduct worship



Many occupations in the Armed Forces are becoming increasingly technical.

services for military personnel and perform other spiritual duties covering beliefs and practices of all religious faiths.

Media and public affairs officers oversee the development, production, and presentation of information or events for the public. These officers may produce and direct motion pictures, videotapes, and TV and radio broadcasts that are used for training, news, and entertainment. Some plan, develop, and direct the activities of military bands. Public affairs officers respond to inquiries about military activities and prepare news releases and reports to keep the public informed.

Protective service officers are responsible for the safety and protection of individuals and property on military bases and vessels. Emergency management officers plan and prepare for all types of natural and man made disasters. They develop warning, control, and evacuation plans to be used in the event of a disaster. Law enforcement and security officers enforce applicable laws on military bases and investigate crimes when the law has been transgressed.

Officers in *transportation* occupations manage and perform activities related to the safe transport of military personnel and material by air, road, rail, and water. Officers normally specialize by mode of transportation or area of expertise since, in many cases, there are licensing and certification requirements. Pilots in the military fly various types of specialized airplanes and helicopters to carry troops and equipment and execute combat missions. Navigators use radar, radio and other navigation equipment to determine their position and plan their route of travel. Officers on ships and submarines work as a team to manage the various departments aboard their vessels. Transportation officers must also direct the maintenance of transportation equipment.



Many professionals are needed to serve the medical needs of the Armed Forces.

Employment

In 1999, over 1.2 million individuals were on active duty in the Armed Forces—about 445,000 in the Army, 272,000 in the Navy, 343,000 in the Air Force, 143,000 in the Marine Corps, and 26,000 in the Coast Guard. Table 1 shows the occupational composition of enlisted personnel in 1999, while table 2 presents similar information for officer personnel.

Table 1. Military enlisted personnel by broad occupational category and branch of military service, 1999

<i>Occupational Group—Enlisted</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Coast Guard</i>	<i>Marine Corps</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Total, all services</i>
Administrative occupations	17,124	16,599	1,834	11,078	13,569	60,204
Combat specialty occupations	105,811	214	—	30,009	1,926	137,960
Construction occupations	4,214	5,732	2,181	3,972	2,775	18,874
Electronic and electrical repair occupations	25,431	51,900	3,075	12,876	43,879	137,161
Engineering, science, and technical occupations	39,362	47,091	2,193	15,705	34,726	139,077
Health care occupations	28,933	21,770	688	0 ¹	23,090	74,481
Support services occupations	12,994	7,210	1,158	3,109	8,654	33,125
Machine operator and precision work occupations	2,295	7,066	1,501	1,940	18,807	31,609
Media and public affairs occupations	8,001	6,393	125	1,831	2,985	19,335
Protective service occupations	24,562	18,602	180	6,315	7,038	56,697
Transportation and material handling occupations	53,556	31,582	4,244	27,876	28,524	145,782
Vehicle machinery mechanic occupations	46,783	47,807	2,392	15,796	39,541	152,319
Human resource development occupations	14,504	10,376	348	1,672	12,459	39,359
Total, by service²	383,570	272,342	19,919	132,179	237,973	1,045,983

¹The Marine Corps employs no medical personnel. Their medical services are provided by the Navy.

²Sum of individual items may not equal totals because personnel on temporary assignment are not included in these occupational classifications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center East

Table 2. Military officer personnel by broad occupational category and branch of service, 1999

<i>Occupational Group—Officer</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Coast Guard</i>	<i>Marine Corps</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Total, all services</i>
Combat specialty occupations	19,470	5,951	42	1,102	2,232	28,797
Engineering, science, and technical occupations	16,106	15,840	1,392	1,706	7,924	42,968
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	8,259	8,905	349	1,290	6,321	25,124
Health care occupations	11,055	11,073	8	0 ¹	7,332	29,468
Support services occupations	1,211	1,636	—	45	1,155	4,047
Media and public affairs occupations	50	1,570	18	142	335	2,115
Protective service occupations	1671	1,446	374	330	786	4,607
Transportation occupations	1,851	19,890	3341	5,017	13,140	43,239
Human resource development occupations	1,256	4,093	265	1,673	4,136	11,423
Total, by service²	60,929	70,404	5,789	11,305	43,361	191,788
Total (Enlisted and Officer)²	444,499	342,746	25,708	143,484	281,334	1,237,771

¹The Marine Corps employs no medical personnel. Their medical services are provided by the Navy.

²Sum of individual items may not equal totals because personnel on temporary assignment are not included in these occupational classifications.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center East

Military personnel are stationed throughout the United States and in many countries around the world. More than a third of military jobs are located in California, Texas, North Carolina, or Virginia. About 258,000 individuals were stationed outside the United States in 1998, including those assigned to ships at sea. Over 116,000 of these were stationed in Europe, mainly in Germany, and another 96,000 assigned to East Asia and the Pacific area, mostly in Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Qualifications, Training, and Advancement

Enlisted personnel. In order to join the services, enlisted personnel must sign a legal agreement called an enlistment contract, which usually involves a commitment to 8 years of service. Depending on the terms of the contract, 2 to 6 years are spent on active duty and the balance are spent in the reserves. The enlistment contract obligates the service to provide the agreed-upon job, rating, pay, cash bonuses for enlistment in certain occupations, medical and other benefits, occupational training, and continuing education. In return, enlisted personnel must serve satisfactorily for the specified period of time.

Requirements for each service vary, but certain qualifications for enlistment are common to all branches. In order to enlist, one must be between the ages of 17 and 35, be a U.S. citizen or immigrant alien holding permanent resident status, not have a felony record, and possess a birth certificate. Applicants who are 17 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian before entering the service. Air Force enlisted personnel must enter active duty before their 28th birthday. Applicants must pass both a written examination—the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—and meet certain minimum physical standards such as height, weight, vision, and overall health. All branches require high school graduation or its equivalent for certain enlistment options. In 1999, over 9 out of 10 volunteers were high school graduates. Single parents are generally not eligible to enlist.

People thinking about enlisting in the military should learn as much as they can about military life before making a decision. This is especially important if you are thinking about making the military a career. Speaking to friends and relatives with military experience is a good idea. Determine what the military can offer you and what it will expect in return. Then talk to a recruiter, who can determine if you qualify for enlistment, explain the various enlistment options, and tell you which military occupational specialties currently have openings. Bear in mind that the recruiter's job is to recruit promising applicants into their branch of military service, so the information he or she gives you is likely to stress the positive aspects of military life in the branch in which the recruiter serves.

Ask the recruiter for the branch you have chosen to assess your chances of being accepted for training in the occupation or occupations of your choice, or, better still, take the aptitude exam to see how well you score. The military uses the aptitude exam as a placement exam, and test scores largely determine an individual's chances of being accepted into a particular training program. Selection for a particular type of training depends on the needs of the service, your general and technical aptitudes, and your personal preference. Because all prospective recruits are required to take the exam, those who do so before committing themselves to enlist have the advantage of knowing in advance whether they stand a good chance of being accepted for training in a particular specialty. The recruiter can schedule you for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery without any obligation. Many high schools offer the exam as an easy way for students to explore the possibility of a military career, and the test also provides insight into career areas where the student has demonstrated aptitudes and interests.

If you decide to join the military, the next step is to pass the physical examination and sign an enlistment contract. This involves choosing, qualifying, and agreeing on a number of enlistment options such as length of active duty time, which may vary according to the enlistment option. Most active duty programs have enlistment options ranging from 3 to 6 years, although there are some 2-year programs. The contract will also state the date of enlistment and other options such as



Pay and benefits in all branches of the Armed Forces are determined by grade and years of service.

bonuses and types of training to be received. If the service is unable to fulfill its part of the contract, such as providing a certain kind of training, the contract may become null and void.

All services offer a “delayed entry program” by which an individual can delay entry into active duty for up to 1 year after enlisting. High school students can enlist during their senior year and enter a service after graduation. Others choose this program because the job training they desire is not currently available but will be within the coming year or because they need time to arrange personal affairs.

Women are eligible to enter most military specialties. Although many women serve in medical and administrative support positions, women also work as mechanics, missile maintenance technicians, heavy equipment operators, fighter pilots, and intelligence officers. Only occupations involving direct exposure to combat are excluded.

People planning to apply the skills gained through military training to a civilian career should first determine how good the prospects are for civilian employment in jobs related to the military specialty which interests them. Second, they should know the prerequisites for the related civilian job. Many occupations require a license, certification, or a minimum level of education. In such cases, it is important to determine whether military training is sufficient to enter the civilian equivalent or, if not, what additional training will be required. Other *Handbook* statements discuss the job outlook for civilian occupations for which military training is helpful. Additional information often can be obtained from school counselors.

Following enlistment, new members of the Armed Forces undergo recruit training, which is better known as “basic” training. Recruit training provides a 6 to 11-week introduction to military life with courses in military skills and protocol. Days and nights are carefully structured and include rigorous physical exercises designed to improve strength and endurance and build unit cohesion.

Following basic training, most recruits take additional training at technical schools that prepare them for a particular military occupational specialty. The formal training period generally lasts from 10 to 20 weeks, although training for certain occupations—nuclear power plant operator, for example—may take as long as a year. Recruits not assigned to classroom instruction receive on-the-job training at their first duty assignment.

Many service people get college credit for the technical training they receive on duty, which, combined with off-duty courses, can lead to an associate degree through community college programs such as the Community College of the Air Force. In addition to on-duty training, military personnel may choose from a variety of educational programs. Most military installations have tuition assistance programs for people wishing to take courses during off-duty hours. These may be correspondence courses or degree programs offered by

local colleges or universities. Tuition assistance pays up to 75 percent of college costs. Also available are courses designed to help service personnel earn high school equivalency diplomas. Each service branch provides opportunities for full-time study to a limited number of exceptional applicants. Military personnel accepted into these highly competitive programs receive full pay, allowances, tuition, and related fees. In return, they must agree to serve an additional amount of time in the service. Other very selective programs enable enlisted personnel to qualify as commissioned officers through additional military training.

Warrant officers. Warrant officers are technical and tactical leaders who specialize in a specific technical area; for example, one group of warrant officers is Army aviators. The Army Warrant Officer Corps comprises less than 3 percent of the total Army. Although small in size, their level of responsibility is high. They receive extended career opportunities, worldwide leadership assignments, and increased pay and retirement benefits. Selection to attend the Warrant Officer Candidate School is highly competitive and restricted to those with the rank of E5 or higher (see table 3).

Officers. Officer training in the Armed Forces is provided through the Federal service academies (Military, Naval, Air Force, and Coast Guard); the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) offered at many colleges and universities; Officer Candidate School (OCS) or Officer Training School (OTS); the National Guard (State Officer Candidate School programs); the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences; and other programs. All are very selective and are good options for those wishing to make the military a career.

Federal service academies provide a 4-year college program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree. Midshipmen or cadets are provided free room and board, tuition, medical care, and a monthly allowance. Graduates receive regular or reserve commissions and have a 5-year active duty obligation, or longer if entering flight training.

To become a candidate for appointment as a cadet or midshipman in one of the service academies, most applicants obtain a nomination from an authorized source (usually a member of Congress). Candidates do not need to know a member of Congress personally to request a nomination. Nominees must have an academic record of the requisite quality, college aptitude test scores above an established minimum, and recommendations from teachers or school officials; they must also pass a medical examination. Appointments are made from the list of eligible nominees. Appointments to the Coast Guard Academy, however, are made strictly on a competitive basis. A nomination is not required.

ROTC programs train students in about 950 Army, 60 Navy and Marine Corps, and 550 Air Force units at participating colleges and universities. Trainees take 2 to 5 hours of military instruction a week in addition to regular college courses. After graduation, they may serve as officers on active duty for a stipulated period of time. Some may serve their obligation in the Reserves or Guard. In the last 2 years of a ROTC program, students receive a monthly allowance while attending school and additional pay for summer training. ROTC scholarships for 2, 3, and 4 years are available on a competitive basis. All scholarships pay for tuition and have allowances for subsistence, textbooks, supplies, and other fees.

College graduates can earn a commission in the Armed Forces through OCS or OTS programs in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard. These officers generally must serve their obligation on active duty. Those with training in certain health professions may qualify for direct appointment as officers. In the case of health professions students, financial assistance and internship opportunities are available from the military in return for specified periods of military service. Prospective medical students can apply to the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, which offers free tuition in a program leading to a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree. In return, graduates must serve for 7 years in either the military or the Public Health Service. Direct appointments also are available for those qualified to serve in other special



Tradition and ceremony are important in the Armed Forces.

duties, such as the judge advocate general (legal) or chaplain corps. Flight training is available to commissioned officers in each branch of the Armed Forces. In addition, the Army has a direct enlistment option to become a warrant officer aviator.

Each service has different criteria for promoting personnel. Generally, the first few promotions for both enlisted and officer personnel come easily; subsequent promotions are much more competitive. Criteria for promotion may include time in service and grade, job performance, a fitness report (supervisor's recommendation), and written examinations. People who are passed over for promotion several times generally must leave the military. The following table shows the officer, warrant officer, and enlisted ranks by service.

Job Outlook

Opportunities should be good for qualified individuals in all branches of the Armed Forces through 2008. Many military personnel retire after 20 years of service with a pension while still young enough to start a new career. About 365,000 enlisted personnel and officers must be recruited each year to replace those who complete their commitment or retire. Since the end of the draft in 1973, the military has met its personnel requirements through volunteers. When the economy is good, it is more difficult for all the services to meet their quotas, while it is much easier to do so in times of recession.

America's strategic position is stronger than it has been in decades. Although there were reductions in personnel due to the reduction in the threat from Eastern Europe and Russia, the number of active duty personnel is now expected to remain about constant through 2008. The Armed Forces' goal is to maintain a sufficient force to fight and win two major regional conflicts occurring at the same time. Political events, however, could cause these plans to change.

Educational requirements will continue to rise as military jobs become more technical and complex. High school graduates and applicants with a college background will be sought to fill the ranks of enlisted personnel, while virtually all officers will need at least a bachelor's degree and, in some cases, an advanced degree as well.

Earnings, Allowances, and Benefits

The earnings structure for military personnel are shown in table 4. Most enlisted personnel started as recruits at Grade E-1 in 1999; however, those with special skills or above-average education started as high as Grade E-4. Most warrant officers started at Grade W-1 or W-2, depending upon their occupational and academic qualifications and the branch of service, but these individuals all had previous military service and this is not an entry-level occupation. Most commissioned officers started at Grade O-1; while some highly trained officers—for example, physicians, engineers, and scientists—started as high as Grade O-3 or O-4.

Table 3. Military rank and employment for active duty personnel, March 1999

<i>Grade Rank and title</i>					
Army		Navy and Coast Guard	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total DOD Employment
Commissioned officers:					
O-10	General	Admiral	General	General	38
O-9	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	114
O-8	Major General	Rear Admiral Upper	Major General	Major General	287
O-7	Brigadier General	Rear Admiral Lower	Brigadier General	Brigadier General	446
O-6	Colonel	Captain	Colonel	Colonel	11,423
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	28,428
O-4	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Major	Major	43,027
O-3	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain	Captain	69,358
O-2	1st Lieutenant	Lieutenant (JG)	1st Lieutenant	1st Lieutenant	28,096
O-1	2nd Lieutenant	Ensign	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant	22,038
Warrant officers:					
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	459
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	2,123
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	4,019
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	—	Chief Warrant Officer	6,455
W-1	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer	—	Warrant Officer	2,402
Enlisted personnel:					
E-9	Sergeant Major	Master Chief Petty Officer	Chief Master Sergeant	Sergeant Major	10,241
E-8	1 st Sergeant/Master Sergeant	Sr. Chief Petty Officer	Senior Master Sergeant	Master Sergeant/1 st Sergeant	26,014
E-7	Sergeant First Class	Chief Petty Officer	Master Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant	99,201
E-6	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer 1st Class	Technical Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	163,075
E-5	Sergeant	Petty Officer 2nd Class	Staff Sergeant	Sergeant	232,854
E-4	Corporal/Specialist	Petty Officer 3rd Class	Senior Airman	Corporal	264,757
E-3	Private First Class	Seaman	Airman 1st Class	Lance Corporal	186,647
E-2	Private	Seaman Apprentice	Airman	Private 1st Class	98,115
E-1	Private	Seaman Recruit	Airman Basic	Private	57,961

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense

In addition to basic pay, military personnel receive free room and board (or a tax-free housing and subsistence allowance), medical and dental care, a military clothing allowance, military supermarket and department store shopping privileges, 30 days of paid vacation a year (referred to as leave), and travel opportunities. Other allowances are paid for foreign duty, hazardous duty, submarine and flight duty, and employment as a medical officer. Athletic and other recreational facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, tennis courts, golf courses, bowling centers, and movies are available on many military installations. Military personnel are eligible for retirement benefits after 20 years of service.

The Veterans Administration (VA) provides numerous benefits to those who have served at least 2 years in the Armed Forces. Veterans are eligible for free care in VA hospitals for all service-related disabilities regardless of time served; those with other medical problems are eligible for free VA care if they are unable to pay the cost of hospitalization elsewhere. Admission to a VA medical center depends on the availability of beds, however. Veterans are also eligible for certain loans, including home loans. Veterans, regardless of health, can convert a military life insurance policy to an individual policy with any participating company in the veteran's State of residence. In addition, job counseling, testing, and placement services are available.

Veterans who participate in the New Montgomery GI Bill Program receive educational benefits. Under this program, Armed Forces personnel may elect to deduct from their pay up to \$100 a month to put toward their future education for the first 12 months of active duty. Veterans who serve on active duty for three years or more, or two years active duty plus four years in the Selected Reserve or National Guard, will receive \$427.87 a month in basic benefits for 36 months.

Those who enlist and serve for less than 3 years will receive \$347.65 a month. In addition, each service provides its own additional contributions for future education. This sum becomes the service member's educational fund. Upon separation from active duty, the fund can be used to finance educational costs at any VA-approved institution. VA-approved schools include many vocational, correspondence, business, technical, and flight training schools; community and junior colleges; and colleges and universities.



Job opportunities in the Armed Forces should be good for qualified people.

Table 4. Military basic monthly pay by grade for active duty personnel, January 1, 1999*Years of service*

Grade	Less than 2	Over 4	Over 8	Over 12	Over 16	Over 20
O-9	6,947.10	7,281.00	7,466.10	7,776.90	8,425.80	8,892.60
O-8	6,292.20	6,634.50	7,129.20	7,466.10	7,776.90	8,425.80
O-7	5,228.40	5,583.90	5,834.40	6,172.50	7,129.20	7,619.70
O-6	3,875.10	4,536.60	4,536.60	4,536.60	5,432.40	5,834.40
O-5	3,099.60	3,891.00	3,891.00	4,224.30	4,845.00	5,277.90
O-4	2,612.40	3,393.30	3,608.70	4,071.90	4,444.80	4,566.60
O-3	2,427.60	3,210.60	3,484.80	3,855.30	3,949.50	3,949.50
O-2	2,117.10	2,871.30	2,930.40	2,930.40	2,930.40	2,930.40
O-1	1,838.10	2,312.10	2,312.10	2,312.10	2,312.10	2,312.10
W-5	—	—	—	—	—	4,221.30
W-4	2,473.20	2,714.10	2,962.80	3,303.00	3,577.80	3,792.00
W-3	2,247.90	2,469.90	2,681.70	2,930.40	3,114.00	3,335.70
W-2	1,968.90	2,192.10	2,438.40	2,623.80	2,809.50	2,993.10
W-1	1,640.40	2,037.90	2,221.50	2,407.20	2,591.70	2,777.70
E-8	—	—	2,412.60	2,547.30	2,682.90	2,811.30
E-7	1,684.80	1,952.10	2,082.90	2,216.70	2,382.60	2,480.40
E-6	1,449.30	1,715.40	1,844.10	2,010.00	2,140.20	2,172.60
E-5	1,271.70	1,514.70	1,680.30	1,811.10	1,844.10	1,844.10
E-4	1,185.90	1,428.60	1,485.30	1,485.30	1,485.30	1,485.30
E-3	1,179.80	1,274.70	1,274.70	1,274.70	1,274.70	1,274.70
E-2	1,075.80	1,075.80	1,075.80	1,075.80	1,075.80	1,075.80
E-1 >4mos	959.40	959.40	959.40	959.40	959.40	959.40

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Defense—Defense Finance and Accounting Service

Sources of Additional Information

Each of the military services publishes handbooks, fact sheets, and pamphlets describing entrance requirements, training and advancement opportunities, and other aspects of military careers. These publications are widely available at all recruiting stations, most State employment service offices, and in high schools, colleges, and public libraries. Information on educational and other veterans' benefits is available from VA offices located throughout the country.

In addition, the *Military Career Guide Online* is a compendium of military occupational, training, and career information presented by the Defense Manpower Data Center, a Department of Defense agency which is designed for use by students and jobseekers. This information is available on the Internet:
<http://www.militarycareers.com>